

April 16, 1982

LB 115

CLERK: 28 ayes, 1 nay to cease debate, Mr. President.

SENATOR CLARK: Debate is ceased. Senator Wiitala, do you wish to close?

SENATOR WIITALA: Mr. Chairman, I would wish to yield my closing time to Senator Kilgarin.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Kilgarin.

SENATOR KILGARIN: Thank you, Mr. President and colleagues, and thank you, Senator Wiitala, for yielding your time to close to me. When you think of this \$10 increase, think of it not only for the working man or woman but think of it for the families that are involved. We are talking about children who need to have a place to live. They need clothing. They need food. It is expensive to raise a family nowadays. And \$190, or \$180, if we give them a \$10 increase, \$190 a week doesn't go very far and it certainly isn't anything excessive I don't think. Back in October of 1980 my father was hurt on the job and he was hurt badly. The company contested the case and thus the workmen's compensation payments to my family weekly stopped and we went for over a year without my father's income, which by the way was much greater than \$180 a week. Had my mother not been working, I don't know what my family would have done. Now there is a case where the company contested the workmen's compensation. It was stopped altogether. First of all, this \$180 is the maximum amount and if we raise it \$10, \$190 is the maximum amount that a worker can receive if they are injured on the job. It is not awarded in every case. I know my father's case which was contested after the award was granted, he didn't receive the full award but it was a satisfactory settlement but it did take over a year and during this time my family suffered a great deal. We are talking about people who are working. These are working people. They are not people who are unemployed. They are hurt on the job. I think a \$10 increase is only fair. Not only can these workmen's compensation cases hurt the families and the workers involved for the immediate period of time following the accident, but it can go on to hurt the family. As a lot of you in here know, two weeks ago yesterday my father had a heart attack and the doctor said that part of the reason for that was because of his injury and subsequent operation that was needed after his accident on the job. So we are talking about working men and women who are out there trying to make a living, staying off welfare, paying taxes, and when they are hurt on the job I think it is our duty to at least give them some semblance of a reasonable weekly wage to support their families.

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